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NEWS

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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June 10, 2010

Donner Diesel Spill Update: Plan to Resume Excavation on Monday, June 14

Crews resumed removal of contaminated soil in the Donner Lake area on Thursday, after rain suspended operations. Operations will shut down for the weekend and start again Monday, June 14 if weather permits. Cleanup operations will require the closure of one lane of I-80 from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

"Removal crews are working as quickly and safely as they can," said Hector Orozco, incident commander for the Department of Fish and Game (DFG). "We are conducting air monitoring and collecting soil samples in the area where the soil is removed to be sure we get it all."

CalTrans permitted the road lane closure for the cleanup operation, and the California Highway Patrol will be monitoring the traffic and determining when it is too backed up, which will trigger a temporary suspension of activities until traffic clears.

DFG and Nevada County Environmental Health (NCEH) responded to the spill on May 26 which occurred when a tanker truck overturned and spilled as much as 3,000 gallons of diesel fuel along I-80 on the west side of Donner Lake. Some of the material washed over the side of the interstate into the soil and watershed of Billy Mack and Summit Creeks.

Though the majority of the spilled fuel was deposited in the center divide, some moved down the median and through a culvert to the hillside above Donner Lake resulting in some staining (dark areas of soil where diesel is present). Responders expect to develop a plan that will most likely call for hand crews to remove the diesel-stained soil in this area.

Environmental monitoring of the area continues for water quality and wildlife impacts. Recent samples from Summit Creek and Donner Lake showed no diesel detected. Scientists will develop restoration plans for the area following the soil removal.

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